

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 278 039

CS 210 278

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TITLE Developmental Aspects of Composition (or Think Young).
PUB DATE 3 Oct 86
NOTE 60p.; Address presented at the Meeting of Colorado Educators (Denver, CO, October 3, 1986).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Development; *Child Language; *Developmental Stages; Early Reading; Kindergarten; *Language Acquisition; Language Usage; Literacy Education; Oral Language; Peer Teaching; Primary Education; Reading Aloud to Others; Reading Instruction; Reading Readiness; Tutoring; *Writing Instruction; *Writing Readiness; Written Language; Young Children
IDENTIFIERS *Emergent Literacy

ABSTRACT

Stressing the importance of understanding child development, this paper first describes the writing of several children in a kindergarten class who represent various levels of emerging literacy. Based on the descriptions of classroom activities, the paper argues that with a developmental perspective the teacher can build instruction on what the children already know about oral language, reading, and writing, focusing on functional experience rather than on merely isolated skills. Further, the paper argues that knowledge of early child development can give teachers insights for instructional methods, as well as professional ammunition in support of these methods. Five ideas on children's writing development are then discussed: (1) young children widely exposed to print, drawing, and adult models, often start writing with no formal instruction before they enter school; (2) such children are able to tell the difference between their writing and their drawing by approximately age 3; (3) one may distinguish some early writing stages, a sequential development, although composition does not necessarily follow an orderly sequence; (4) children's writing needs to be responded to within the child's social context of oral language and art; and (5) studies of early writing and invented spelling are complementary in their findings. Figures illustrating children's language and some theories of development are included. (SRT)

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TITLE: DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF COMPOSITION
(or THINK YOUNG)

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Invited address for the Meeting of Colorado Educators
sponsored by the State Department of Education and the State
Language Arts Association, on the topic of written
composition ("Colorado on the Write Road"), October 3, 1986,
Denver.

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DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF COMPOSITION (or THINK YOUNG)

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The purpose of this speech is to relate knowledge from fields of development to your teaching of the language arts. I will be drawing from many different fields of knowledge, but I will avoid being too technical. We begin with an opening scene showing how such knowledge helps classroom teachers. Visualize with me, if you would, Lee Fisher's classroom; she's a kindergarten teacher. She has attended a literacy awareness workshop and the ideas she got from this workshop permeate the classroom, and the entire school--all the way up to the teacher in the eighth grade. I will talk about some of the things that happen in that kindergarten class.

Next we ask questions that may be in your mind or in the mind of any elementary school language arts teacher. "Why should I bother knowing anything about early development? What in the world is that going to do for me?" Since you're here, you must have at least some curiosity about that. I'm going to give you some ideas, but then I'm going to ask you for your rationale about why developmental

know-how makes you a stronger teacher.

Then my next question is: "How far back in a child's life do I need to know about development?" And my third question is: "What is the nature of some universal patterns or stages that I can look for?" Some of these are language development milestones that were described long ago. I'll also talk about some of the newest work in literary development of young children.

KINDERGARTEN SCENE:

HOW DEVELOPMENTAL KNOW-HOW HELPS A CLASSROOM TEACHER

Now visualize with me, if you would, a kindergarten class. There are going to be five principles developed in this scene:

1. Emerging literacy level in this class varies.
2. Real-life functions of literacy development are an important theme in such a classroom.
3. Functional use of language speaks to the social and emotional, as well as to the cognitive.
4. Opportunity to experiment with emerging reading and writing strategies is provided.
5. Literacy development is a more appropriate term for what is happening in this classroom than is reading readiness.

The overall theme of this scene is: The children in Lee Fisher's room have a very good grasp on what it is to

read and write and why they want to do these things.

On the first day of class our teacher, Lee Fisher, gave each child a booklet of blank paper saying, "This is your journal; you may write in it." One child spoke up for many, "But I don't know how to write!"

"That's O. K.," said our teacher, "Just pretend to. If you think you don't know how to write, just pretend."

Once our teacher established that scribble was O. K., the children took off. It has been the children who have requested help in labeling and in keeping a record of communications. Almost all of the encounters with print in this classroom have been child initiated.

Lee Fisher has just finished listening to David "rereading" one of his scribble stories, during the daily drawing and writing and reading time, first thing in the morning. The teacher has checked the notes made two weeks ago about this same story, and has found that David has "story-matched" his set of scribble to his specific message with good accuracy.

At the teacher's remark about liking his "reading", David replies, "Oh if you liked that one, then you'll love this one. I can 'read' it even better!" David has "written" a scribbled letter to the teacher and his letter format does not look like his scribbled story format. Although they both know that David is not using language in a traditional

sense, they both think of him as a writer and as a reader. He has a typical compulsion to communicate, and writing inevitably results in reading, which is a social experience most of the time. Through his writing David is also developing his oral language by "reading" what he writes. When, later on, he needs to read what someone else has written, the chances are he is going to be highly successful at it because back in kindergarten he has had lots and lots of practice in reading what he and others have written.

Several years ago our teacher, Lee Fisher, did not even have much in the way of paper and pencil work in the classroom, much less individual notebooks for "Natural Writing Diaries," and especially not on the first day. But she went to this emerging literacy workshop. Lee thought and read about the different ideas and tried them out in the classroom. The best thing was that this activity was highly contagious. The first grade teacher began to permit children to scribble, letting them ease into writing, not punishing or correcting them, or saying, "That's wrong." Now print references in this classroom are almost always in the context of whole language experiences. On the few occasions where children mention isolated alphabet letters, it is for spelling words in their messages. They make letters, but they write messages, differentiating the terminology.

Emerging literacy level in this class varies. Let me show you some samples of how literacy competence may vary. Here is David and his story-matching scribble I mentioned just a moment ago, Karen's word-matching scribble, Reinier's combination of scribble and letters, and Michelle's scribble integration.

Insert Fig. 1, "Literacy level varies"

Let's look at each one of these in turn. Here's David's story again about going to visit a spooky house.

Insert Fig. 2, "David's story-matching scribble"

He "read" the story to the teacher who wrote it down. His teacher kept his story in a file with others and was able to refer to it on a later date when David "read" this story again, with considerable accuracy.

Now let's look at Karen. What she scribbles here matches almost word for word with the length of the word as it is usually written.

Insert Fig. 3, "Karen's word-matching scribble"

Now let's look at another child; here's Reinier who drew a

combination of scribble and letters.

Insert Fig. 4, "Reinier's combination of scribble &
letters"

If you could see him actually do it, you would see his use of the "left to rightness;" he has that concept. His scribble has a flow, like a river, a linearity.

They say that as early as age three, a child differentiates marks used for drawing and for pretending to write. "This is my picture," a child might say, or "This is my letter."

With Michelle's story we see integration: some scribbles and some words.

Insert Fig. 5, "Michelle's scribble integration"

One can almost read this, as one can actually pick out some words. Donald Graves found in his research in New Hampshire that when a child had command of seven consonants--could use the sound of these consonants and write them down--such a child was ready to take off on invented spellings (1983). Given some encouragement with words like, "It's O. K. to scribble," or "It's O. K. to invent spellings," the children really took off in their writing in Lee Fisher's

room. Children are often better at reading invented spellings than teachers are.

There is a cultural aspect, too. Here is Holleh's scribble writing. Our media assistant at North Texas State University, Ali Hornavar, told me that his child had been scribbling.

Insert Fig. 6, "Holleh's Arabic-look scribble writing"

"It's not real writing," he said, "but it looks somewhat like the Arabic writing she sees at home." One can see that these scribbles are somewhat different from scribbles often found in children whose native language is English. The curls with lines that look somewhat like tails and dots above are an important part of the Arabic way of writing.

Some of the children in the class know another fact about writing; they know that there has to be some sort of separation between words. Some have spaces between their scribbles to represent spaces between words; a few use periods or slashes to separate them. (Such inventions look different to us but are logical to a child.) One child, Natasha, used to a computer in the home, says the dots she makes between invented words are for the space bar. (An example is found in Figure 7.)

Insert Fig. 7, "List for godmother"

She made a list for her godmother to let her know some of the things they could do when she went over to her house. The first item says, "Maybe play space bugs." (Space bugs were some of the little furry things that publishers gave out at a conference and her godmother had brought to her. She became quite enamored of them and involved them in all kinds of fantasy play.) The second item, "Ice and bears," refers to some other small toy animals. She had some trouble with her "3" and wrote it backwards. She wants to dance. Four is "Read books," as she wants to "read" some little books to her godmother. Five is "Claws." Godmother had bought a lion at a garage sale. Since it didn't have any claws, she wanted to make some and put them on the stuffed animal. And she wants to go out in the garden, and she wants to play with the cats. The words are separated by her "space bar" periods.

In another example, with the stimulus of the teacher, "If I were a frog..." Imelda continued, "I would jump I would jump up (on) leaves." She did this sentence entirely by herself. She used the abbreviations "w" or "wd" for "would."

Insert Fig. 8, "If I were a frog"

Some of the children in Lee Fisher's class are using standard writing. Some can write a story of about four sentences with almost completely standard spelling, or with a spelling that can readily be understood with no assistance. Some of the advanced children are willing to help the children who need more help in expressing their thoughts on paper. Sometimes older children in the same school can come into the class to act as scribes or to read stories they have written precisely for young children.

There is also a younger class in Lee Fisher's school-- a group of four-year-olds. Because all the teachers have gotten caught up with what is going on with the emerging literacy movement in the school, they have been observing children's scribbled writing more closely. This sample was collected from Gina, aged four. She is differentiating drawing and linear scribbles.

Insert Fig. 9, "Drawing & linear scribbles"

Here is a picture by Melissa of the same four-year-old class, with an identifiable picture and linear scribbles read as, "It's a Monster."

Insert Fig. 10, " Identifiable picture with linear

scribbles"

Here is a general message using letter strings by Jeremy, also age 4. He does not "read" the scribbles to us in a word-by-word fashion, but says instead that his writing is, in a general way, about a witch.

Insert Fig. 11, "General message for letter strings"

Here we see an example of the directional principle. Becky, age 5, has learned to go from left to right.

Insert Fig. 12, "Directional principle"

Here is a child using the inventory principle. Paige, age 5, in Lee Fisher's room has simply written all the words that she can write from memory.

Insert Fig. 13, "Inventory principle"

Swen, age 5, also in Lee Fisher's room is into copying. Swen will copy anything and everything. Lee Fisher's room has a "print-rich" environment, and so there is lots of material for Swen to copy, such as this sign.

Insert Fig 14, "Copying principle"

And, last but not least, is four-year-old Tavanya's use of a recurring principle. She is not really so much into letter symbols, but she takes other symbols and repeats them. It seems to be an attempt at symbolic-like writing, and of course, she wrote her name.

Insert Fig. 15, "Recurring principle"

In summary, our scene in Lee Fisher's room has shown us that literacy level varies, even emerging literacy level.

Real-life function of literacy development is a theme in this classroom. Signs about Lee's room are functional, not just labels. Examples are: "Wet paint," "Do not remove," "Only 4 here," "Sign up", "Dictate songs here", "Lists here," "Mail for special people here," "Mail for pen pals," "Go to the art center from here". Our teacher knows that the functions of literacy are as much a part of learning to read and write as are the formal aspects (e.g., left to right, space between words). And what is happening in Lee's room is not just cognitive; print speaks to the social and emotional as well.

Children in this class feel free to communicate not only what they know, but also how they feel. One child in

Lee Fisher's class, Joey, scrawls the word bom (bomb) on his picture of one falling earthward from a plane toward what appears to be his school. "Is a bomb going to drop on us?" he queries his teacher.

"What do you know about bombs, Joey?" responds this developmentally-oriented teacher, realizing the need to find out more about this child's ideas and concerns. Further questions will be based on what the child says next, so that the teacher can gather information necessary to making an appropriate response, with appropriate support, reassurance, and information. The teacher will work from the child's concern, not the concerns of adults and will respond at the level at which this young child can use information.

"I think all planes carry bombs," continues Joey, "and I just heard one flying overhead, and I wonder if it will drop a bomb on our school?"

"Airplanes that fly over our school do not carry bombs. They carry people. People like you and me." (Gives child a hug.) Joey crosses out the bomb in the picture and the word for it, and puts people looking out of the windows of the plane. Then he mouths "p-p-p-pee-e-e-p-l-l-l" and writes the letters ppl (people). Children in this class know that expressing emotionally-charged content is an important function of language.

Children are experimenting with emerging reading and

writing strategies. "That's my name on the snack chart," says Nicholas, another child in Lee Fisher's room.

"No, that's mine," says Nathan.

"How do you know that's your name?"

"Cause it's got an 'A' here." (Points to the second letter.) Nicholas has developed the reading strategy of focusing only on the first letter of a word; Nathan can go him one better. "And yours is a little bit longer," Nathan adds, finding it in the unused pile and comparing. Nathan used one aspect of configuration (dimension of length), but showed double classification (to use a Piagetian term) with two emerging reading strategies.

Nicholas now takes his name card from Nathan and with his encouragement begins to copy it over and over, looking at each letter individually, recording it on the paper and then looking at the next one, making sure not to miss any. He spends 15 to 20 minutes and several sheets of paper rewriting his name. (Our observant teacher quietly makes a note of this activity on a handy pad, to be slipped into Nicholas' file. The teacher notes that this child is putting himself through a grueling practice. If a teacher had initiated it, it would have seemed inhumane.

Our teacher notes that this is a big step for Nicholas, as he has never been very interested in printing words, though he has had some relish for scribbling. The teacher

monitors this peer tutoring from a distance, not interfering, but giving non-verbal encouragement.

It is likely that Nathan will continue to take an interest in Nicholas' progress, showing him how to copy names of other children from their mail cubbies. Nicholas may well rewrite them over and over. Nathan will probably stay close to him to give help when needed.

Thus, in large part initiative comes from the children in this classroom, and encouragement comes from the teacher to experiment with emerging reading and writing strategies.

Literacy development is a more appropriate term for what is happening in this classroom than reading readiness. Our teacher believes that young children read and write their way to readiness. Children learn to read by reading functionally important material and they learn to write by writing. School is continuing literacy development, not starting it.

In the book center of this room are varied items. In addition to picture books of good quality, there are home-made books, such as the environmental print folders. Amy and Jennifer are busy reading The Cereal Book. A bottom caption to this series of stapled file folders reads: "Can you read the cereal book? Read it to a friend." Each page of the book has the front of a box of cereal that the children in this class have brought in. There is also a tooth paste

book, a store book, and soup book derived in a similar manner. Also, there are books about their experiences as a class, such as "Our Trip to the Zoo." The children have made the illustrations; the captions have been written by the children themselves in some cases or have been dictated to the teacher.

Our teacher knows that such materials can build developmentally on literacy that the children already have developed, their already extensive environmental print vocabulary. Moreover, such material can contextualize later attention to sound symbol correspondence. Our teacher knows that meaningful contact with written language has started for every child in the class long before their entering day.

Our teacher also knows that being read to plays a special role in literacy development. Besides the quality story books, the "Big Books" (enlarged versions), predictable pattern books (old familiar favorites for a sense of confidence and control), and literature for almost every content area, the class has another looked-forward to reading event. Three "authors of the week" pick six pieces of "writing" from their file folders, and put them up on the board. At the end of the week they "read" them to a group, inviting the other children in the group to ask questions. Some of the children are bringing in what they have "written" at home. The children also enjoy the times of

Sustained Uninterrupted "Reading" and "Writing" when even the teacher and any volunteers (acting as models), everybody, "reads" or "writes" for a period of time.

In summary, these children in Lee Fisher's room have a good grasp on what it is to read and write, and why they want to do these useful things. With a developmental perspective, this teacher is building instruction on what the children already know about oral language, reading, and writing, focusing on functional experience rather than on merely isolated skills. This teacher is encouraging the children's attempts at writing without undue concern for proper formation of letters or conventional spelling. Let's encourage the Lee Fishers.

(Note: Sources for this scene include: Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1985; Clay, 1975; Heald-Taylor, 1984; International Reading Association, 1986; Lamme, 1985; Palincsar, 1986; NOVA, 1985; Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, N. D.; Vygotsky, 1978; Willert & Kamii, 1985; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976.)

QUESTIONS:

IF I AM A LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER K-6--

Why should I bother knowing anything about early child development?

I think I can give you a couple of reasons.

Developmental knowledge can give us professional insights as

to how to proceed, as well as professional ammunition in support of what we do. We draw from the fields of developmental psychology, developmental linguistics and create some sort of rationale. Herein lies some interesting know-how from Piaget, from Lenneberg, from Catherine Snow, and others. How can we get into literacy in a more natural way, for example, in the manner in which a child learns oral language? Can we apply some of what we know about what happens way back then when a child is learning language to learning about reading and writing? Can we learn something from the fields of development, and if so, does that give us power for justifying the things we do in our class?

Understanding of developmental trends also allows teachers to view children's responses in a new light. Instead of correcting the child for making a mistake, teachers can say, "Hey! That child's mistake is developmental and interesting. It shows growth."

Many are knowing better when to back up, and when a child on the brink of the next growth pattern needs nudging forward. Many now know how to observe evaluatively rather than just test, test, test. They have developmental facts and research for parents and "significant others" and they have copies of Elkind's The Hurried Child for ammunition. For much of what they are now doing, they can give you three developmental reasons and six research references.

They feel professional, up to date, powerful, and creative. Observation leads them to believe they are helping children more effectively than they ever had before. They have ammunition to alert parents to the limitations of formal assessments and standardized tests, not only of pre-first graders' reading and writing, but for truly significant growth for older children as well. They know with greater assurance if the purposes and objectives of their language arts program are realistic in terms of what is known about children's language development. They know about different developmental learning styles and how to provide for them. What is true for a developmentally prepared teacher in schools such as the one in the preceding scene may be true for you.

How far back in a child's life do I need to know about development?

Children begin to learn to speak and listen, read and write very early in life. Any explanation of children's oral language that begins when they say their first word-- begins much too late. We need to go back much earlier than that to understand what is going on. Similarly, to understand when children first begin to read and write, we are wrong to begin when children get their first textbook in school, are reading the first word in their preprimer, or are marking on their first readiness worksheet, or when they

print their names in their best manuscript printing. Much in the way of emerging literacy was happening when the child identified that McDonald's sign long, long ago.

In fact we even have a research study of a young child speaking to an unborn baby brother still in his mother's body. "Hi, Ted!" he announces, "I know your name is going to be Ted. I'm David." Apparently he did it often enough that when the baby was born, and David said, "I'm David," the baby had an orienting reaction as if he had heard David's voice before. That's how "way back" language development seems to go. Ken Goodman feels reading and writing begin at birth.

Certainly there are other researchers that have talked about the dance between mother and child at the beginnings of communication, and how the mother scaffolds to help the child get meanings from that huge immersion of language that can be so bewildering. The mother helps move that child through the maze by simplifying and elaborating. "Mommy shoe?" says a child. Her mother responds, "Oh, you want me to get another pair of shoes from the closet." The mother clarifies and simplifies from the variety of possible meanings.

A child comes to your classroom bringing a long language-learning history. Investigators have uncovered some universal patterns or stages you can look for in

language development and in literacy development and some patterns of individual differences. Children do not go through these patterns at the same rate, nor with the same style. Knowing about normal patterns may alert you to developmental delays that warrant your attention. Understanding the roots of language in your classroom gives you professional power.

What is the nature of any universal patterns or stages I can look for in development of language and thought?

You may be familiar with three very gross, global stages of language development commonly known as: prelinguistic, protolinguistic, and true linguistic, and approximately when and how they occur.

Insert Fig. 16, "3 Language stages"

You may be familiar with the milestones of language development, according to Lenneberg (1966). There is much material here on whether, when, and how until four years of age, and then Lenneberg quits his description of typical language development milestones.

Insert Fig. 17, "Lenneberg's Developmental Milestones in Language Development"

Children go through these stages, but not necessarily at the same speed, or with the same rate, or with the same quality. Some children may accelerate, so that they almost appear to miss stages in sound development or syntax development. But generally you will find these stages and you will find them relatively universal.

You will also find that children tend to universally overgeneralize language rules. Children do this whether they are learning to speak English, Spanish, or Russian. In doing so, they make mistakes, such as saying "cutted" for "cut," but they are creative errors that stem from the child's constructing internally an understanding of how language is structured.

Let's move on to children's development in composition. Lamme and Green (1985) have recently come up with three precompositional stages, in which one starts with less conceptually-developed scribbles and/or a few letters in stage 1. Stage 2 sees the development of more ideas, more letters, and perhaps some copied words. At stage 3 we begin to see the fragmented elements that will be needed for compositions: longer lists of words, perhaps some attempts at phonetic spelling, perhaps a complete message (but one hard to decipher) and some indications that words have a beginning and an end, such as in the use of spaces or dots.

However, we do not see a message that can be deciphered by a person away from the composer of it.

Insert Fig. 18, "Lamme/Green Precompositional Stages"

Compositional stages according to Lamme and Green also follow three stages. At first are simple messages in Stage 1 that gradually become stories (4 or more sentences) with some sort of plot in Stage 3.

Insert Fig. 19, "Lamme/Green Compositional Stages"

Writing development. During the past decade, several important ideas have grown out of research on children's writing development. Consider five of them.

(1) Young children widely exposed to print, drawing, and adult models, often start writing with no formal instruction before they enter school. (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984.) It is very important to provide a print-rich environment for young children, long before they enter the elementary grades. We don't need to cram it down, jam it down them or use ditto skills sheets. We need to give them the opportunity to explore in a print-rich environment, should they decide to do so.

(2) Such children are able to tell the difference

between their writing and their drawing by approximately age three (e. g., DeFord, 1980). They do this before they are able to produce letters or words that adults can recognize (e. g., Clay, 1980). Although this early writing may not look much different from scribbling to an adult, symbols that children call writing have a linearity (strings), directionality, uniformity, flow, and rhythm. Moreover, they are interpreted as messages by the child writers, who attempt to read them back (e. g., Dyson, 1981).

(3) One may distinguish some early writing stages, a sequential development, although composition does not necessarily follow an orderly sequence. Young children may move back and forth among stages depending on topic, motivation, and social context. They may typically work in the level of a given stage, but you have to be ready for almost everything. Every child does not necessarily follow the same sequence.

Examples of stages are the following: 1. (Beginning) scribble and the understanding that print "talks" and that symbols are necessary to write; 2. development of letter-like shapes; 3. grouped letters indicating word boundaries and some letter/sound correspondence; 4. writing known, isolated words from memory and using more advanced letter/sound correspondences; 5. writing of simple sentence or sentences with control of thought and punctuation; 6.

conventional stories, personal letters, and informational messages (e. g., DeFord, 1980).

(4) **Children's writing needs to be responded to within the child's social context of oral language and art.** For young children, writing is often embedded in speech and in the drawing of pictures (e. g., Graves, 1975). Focus on and encourage children's thought.

(5) **Studies of early writing and invented spelling are complementary in their findings.** Spelling development often, but not always, parallels compositional writing development. Briefly, spelling development may follow the following sequence, as described by Gentry (1981): 1. Precommunicative: a child uses scribble, mock letters or pretend writing, or random ordering of letters; 2. Semi-phonetic: most salient sound features are represented in words ("srd" for "sword"); 3. Phonetic: all surface sound features are represented in words, with an advanced command of sound/letter correspondence ("pickshr" for "picture"), 4. Transitional: many correct spelling patterns are applied, and some memorized words ("howse" for "house").

Insert Fig. 20, "Gentry's Stages of Invented Spellings"

Now let's look at this chart which compares the Lamme/Green scale in the development of composition, and 2

ways of describing the development of spelling through different invented spelling stages (Gentry, 1981; Paul, 1976). You can see that there are some complementary stages.

Insert Fig. 21, "Comparison of stages"

Early childhood educators can become like anthropologists in studying the roots of young children's writing, and become absolutely fascinated with the process. Read watched some young children playing with blocks and other alphabet toys. Even some of the youngest three-year-olds used these toys to form words. Not memorizing, such children were learning a sound system (Read, 1971).

Story structure stages. Next I would like to share with you Applebee's story structure stages (1978).

Insert Fig. 22, "The Structure of Children's Stories"

Children's stories may developmentally reflect various story structures. The arrows indicate complementary attributes, which do not show up until the stage of primitive narratives. Straight lines indicate shared attributes with the central theme of the story. The parallelograms indicate the centers of the stories, and the circles indicate the incidents or elements of the story. Let's look at a few

samples.

Insert Fig. 23, "Applebee's diagrams and descriptions
of children's story structure stages"

Developing concepts about literature. To view literature as an ordered creation of the human imagination, to step back from literature and appreciate its wide array of attributes, is an ability that also develops gradually. Children may initially think that imaginative stories are events actually occurring long, long ago (Applebee, 1978). They may have trouble with figurative language, being very literal minded. Example: a child might respond to the line of poetry, "My love is like a red, red rose," by saying in a puzzled tone, "She pricks you?"

Another developmental example is a response to Kay Starbird's poem, "December Leaves," in which the poet describes fallen leaves as "cornflakes that fill the lawn's wide dish." First graders often responded literally and with egocentrism. They responded they didn't like it because "leaves can't make cornflakes" or "I have to rake leaves and I don't like them." Second graders apparently showed developing evaluations based on poetry as a work of art: "I could see the leaves and snow in my mind." "I liked the description of snow as sugar." (Fisher &

Natarella, 1979.)

Hopefully literacy and literary use of language develop side by side. Look for literary development patterns in your class--current status and development--throughout the school year. Provide not only a print-rich environment, but also one a rich literary one.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Developmental know-how gives the teacher understanding of why children write as they do. It fosters respect for "mistakes" that are actually creative errors, based on the child's developing understanding of how our language system works. It aids a teacher in planning instructional strategies, and gives power to defend these strategies to people who might be less knowledgeable about development. Think young. Know development: bring a special depth of understanding to teaching written composition at any level.

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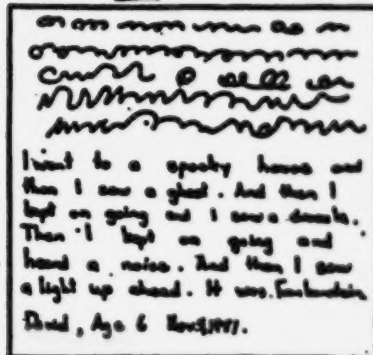
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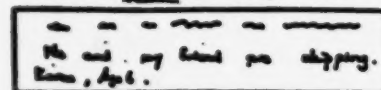
Figure 1

Literacy Level Varies

David's story-matching scribble



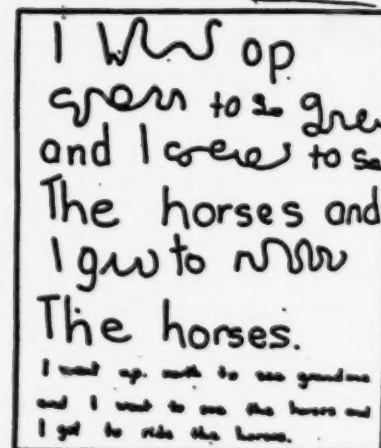
Karen's word-matching scribble



Reinier's combination of scribble and letters



Michelle's scribble integration



Heald-Taylor, B. G. (1984). Scribble in first grade writing. *The Reading Teacher*, 38(1), 4-8.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 2

David's story-matching scribble

on on non in as in
on on on on on on
Curt P well as
on on on on on on
on on on on on on

I went to a spooky house and
then I saw a ghost. And then I
kept on going and I saw a dracula.
Then I kept on going and
heard a noise. And then I saw
a light up ahead. It was Frankenstein.

David ~~scribble~~ ~~scribble~~

Figure 3

Karen's word-matching scribble

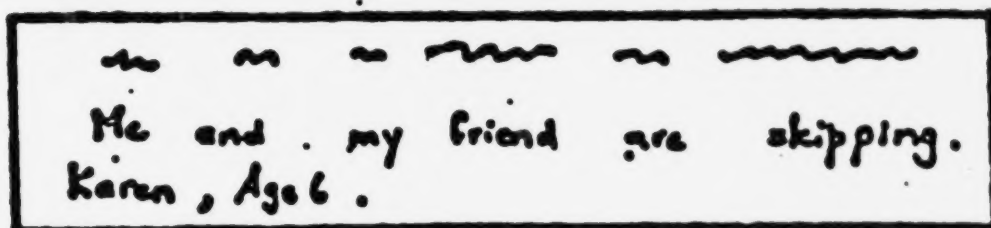


Figure 4

Reinler's combination of scribble
and letters



Figure 5

Michelle's scribble Integration

I W W op
grew to see green
and I grew to see
The horses and
I grew to rrrr
The horses.
I went up. north to see grandma
and I went to see the horses and
I got to ride the horses.

Figure 6

الله هو خير
الله



Figure 6. Holleh's Arabic-look scribble/writing. The dots are an important part of this system. It says "Holleh is good."

(Age 5)

Collected by Ali Honarvar.

Figure 7

MAY BE PLAY
1. SPACED
2. I C E . A N D . O E S
S E . O A N C E
T E R A I N D . B O O K
G A A W S
C A T F I N

Figure 7 "List for godmother"

Collected by Carol Mason Wolfe

Imelda 3-15-86

If I were a frog
 I would jump
 on leaves.

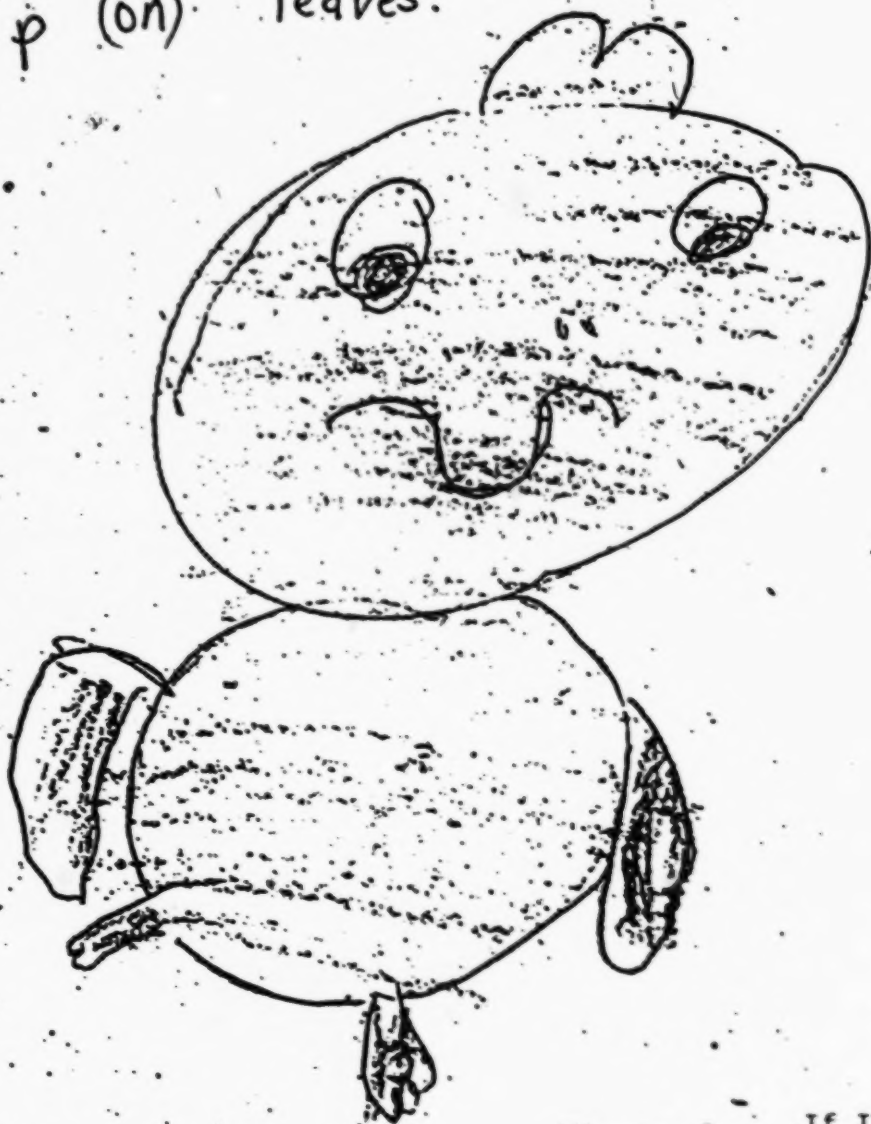


Figure 8

If I were a Frog
(age 6) Collected by student

Dawn Richardson, NTSU

Figure 9

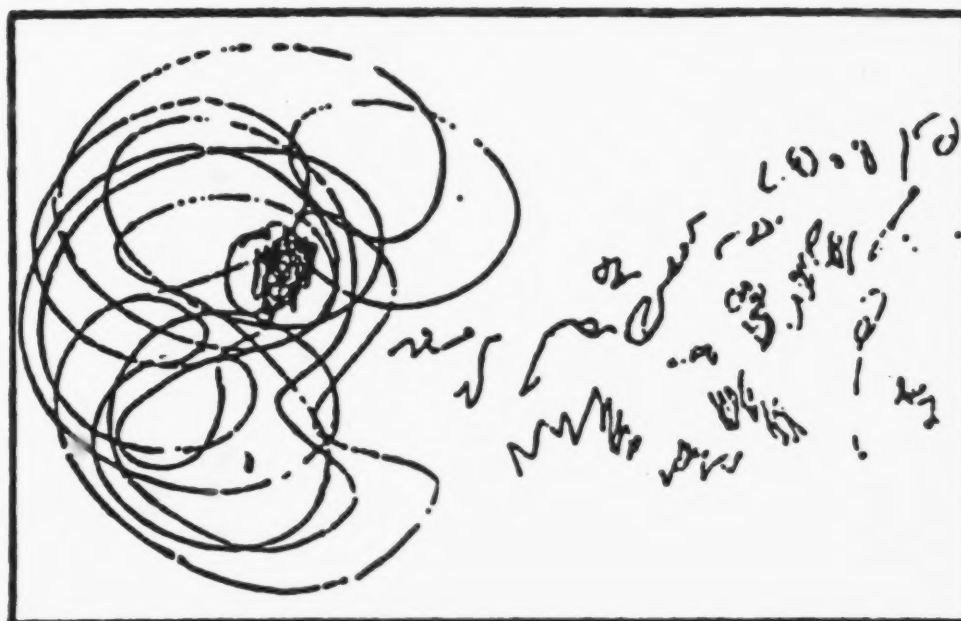


Figure 9. Drawing and linear scribbles. Gina, age 4

Figure 10

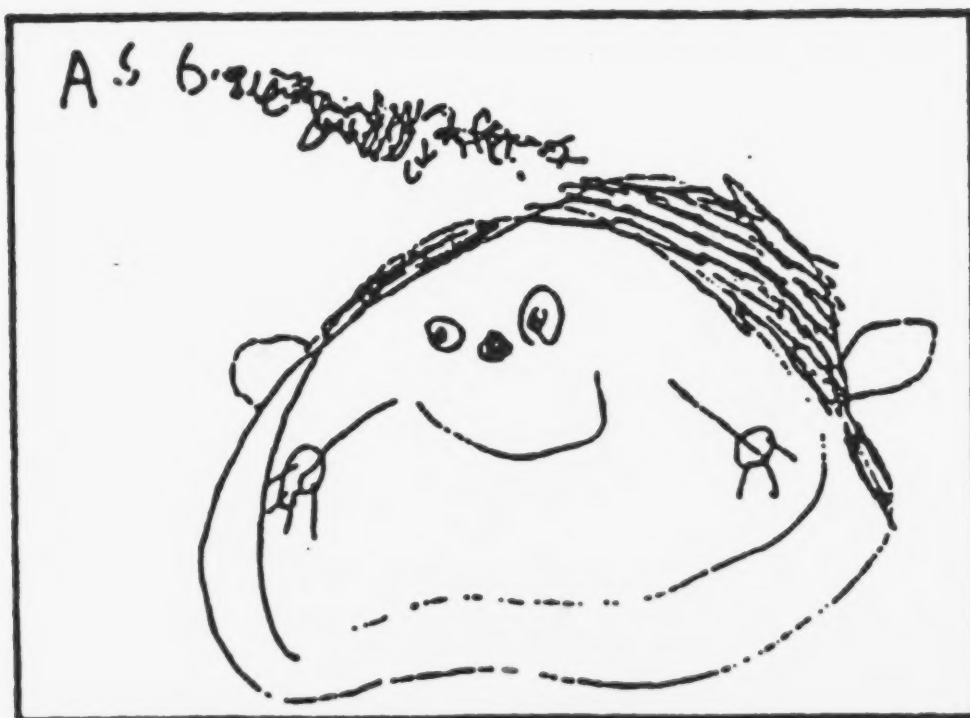


Figure 10. Identifiable picture
with linear scribbles read as
"It's a Monster." Melissa, age 4

Figure 11

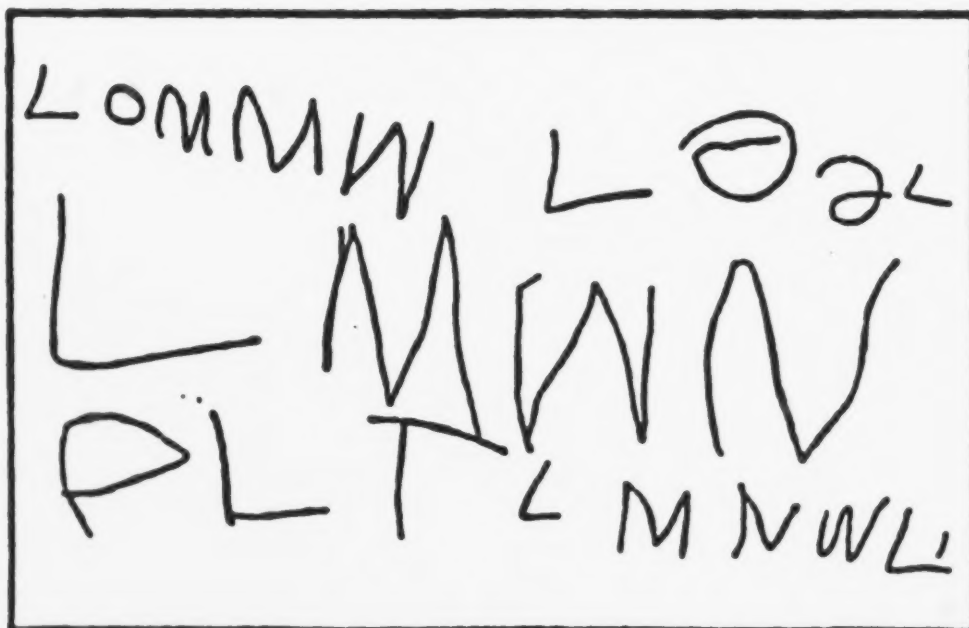


Figure 11. General message for
letter strings. Jeremy, age 4
"It's about a witch."

Figure 12

MY-SISTERHAD HER
BRTHDAY & OAY'S A GO.

Figure 12. Directional principle. Becky, age 5

Figure 13

DOG ALEX
MOMMY PEGGY
DADDY DAVID
PAIGE IS MY NAME
LOVE ALEX

Figure 13. Inventory principle of known phrases. Paige, age 5

Figure 14



Figure 14. Copying principle
(copied from poster). Swen,
age 5

Figure 15

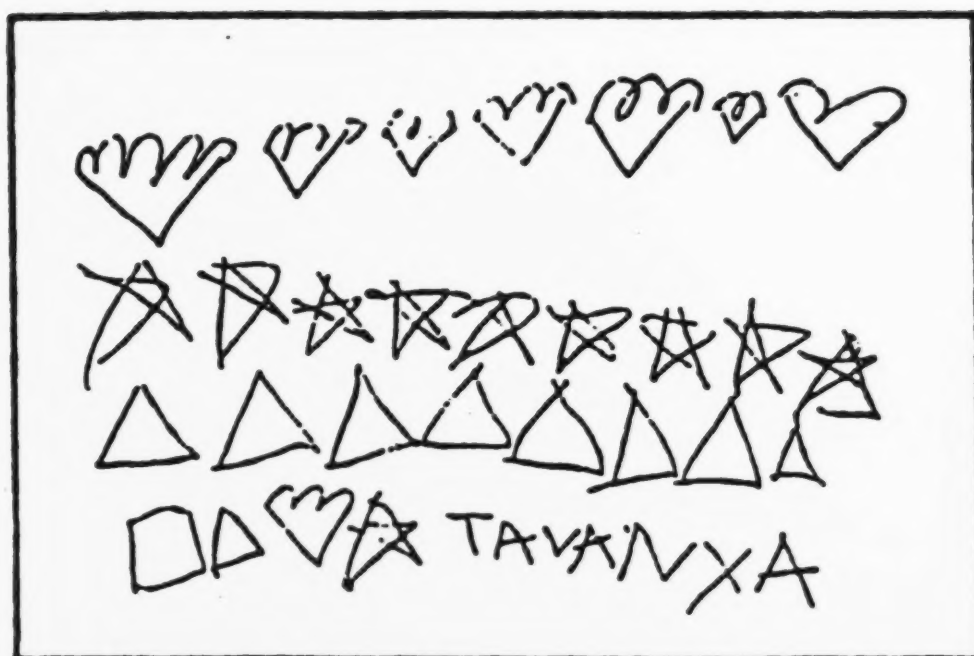


Figure 15. Recurring principle.
Tavanya, age 5

Figure 16. Three Language Stages

Three language stages (Prelinguistic, Protolinguistic, True Linguistic). One gross way of looking at learning the language of others is in three stages: before language (prelinguistic), not quite language (protolinguistic) and true language (true linguistic). These stages (as is the case with those of Piaget) correspond to certain ages, but with great individual variation. While the order of language stages is stable, ages are approximate.

THREE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT STAGES

Prelinguistic

- Birth to 3 months (gurgles--coo)
- 3 to 12 months (babble)

Protolinguistic

- 12 months to 2 years (walk-talk)

True linguistic

- 2 to 6 years and beyond (progressive lengthening and complicating of sentences with embedding and subordination, and progressive refinement of social uses of language)

Figure 17.

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

(FROM LENNEBERG)

At the completion of:

Vocalization and Language

12 weeks

Markedly less crying than at 8 weeks; when talked to and nodded at, smiles, followed by squealing-gurgling sounds usually called cooing, which is vowel-like in character and pitch-modulated; sustains cooing for 15-20 seconds.

16 weeks

Responds to human sounds more definitely; turns head; eyes seem to search for speaker; occasionally some chuckling sounds.

20 weeks

The vowel-like cooing sounds begin to be interspersed with more consonantal sounds; labial fricatives, spirants and nasals are common; acoustically, all vocalizations are very different from the sounds of the mature language of the environment.

6 months

Cooing changing into babbling resembling one-syllable utterances; neither vowels nor consonants have very fixed recurrences; most common utterances sound somewhat like ma, mu, da, or di.

8 months

Reduplication (or more continuous repetitions) becomes frequent; intonation patterns become distinct; utterances can signal emphasis and emotions.

10 months

Vocalizations are mixed with sound — play such as gurgling or bubble-blowing appears to wish to imitate sounds, but the imitations are never quite successful; beginning to differentiate between words heard by making differential adjustment.

12 months

Identical sound sequences are replicated with higher relative frequency of occurrence and words (mamma or dad) are emerging; definite signs of understanding some words and simple commands (show me your eyes).

Figure 17 continued (Lenneberg's stages of lang. dev.)

- 18 months** Has a definite repertoire of words — more than three, but less than fifty; still much babbling but now of several syllables with intricate intonation pattern; no attempt at communicating information and no frustration for not being understood; words may include items such as thank you or come here, but there is little ability to join any of the lexical items into spontaneous two-item phrases; understanding is progressing rapidly.
- 24 months** Vocabulary of more than 50 items (some children seem to be able to name everything in environment); begins spontaneously to join vocabulary items into two-word phrases; all phrases appear to be own creations; definite increase in communicative behavior and interest in language.
- 30 months** Fastest increase in vocabulary with many new additions every day; no babbling at all; utterances have communicative intent; frustrated if not understood by adults; utterances consist of at least two words, many have three or even five words; sentences and phrases have a characteristic child grammar, that is, they are rarely verbatim repetitions of an adult utterance; intelligibility is not very good yet, though there is great variation among children; seems to understand everything that is said to him.
- 3 years** Vocabulary of some 1,000 words; about 80% of utterances are intelligible even to strangers; grammatical complexity of utterances is roughly that of colloquial adult language, although mistakes still occur.
- 4 years** Language is well-established; deviations from the adult norm tend to be more in style than in grammar.

Figure 18

**Lamme/Green Scale of
Children's Development in Composition**

Precompositional

- Precompositional 1 -** Scribbles
Mock letters
A few letters or numbers
A small string of letters or numbers
- Precompositional 2 -** Letters
Mock letters read as words
Repeated group of letters
Incomplete alphabet or list of numerals
One memorized or copied word
- Precompositional 3 -** List of two to ten words
Mock words in a long list (some phonetic
relationship to word)
Very hard to read message
Complete alphabet (alone or with any of above)
Word boundaries (spaces, dots, lines, etc. to
separate words)
-

Figure 19

Lamme/Green Compositional Stages

Compositional

- Compositional 1 - Simple message (I love you)
List of ten or more words
(phonetic or memorized spelling)
Complete alphabet with over ten words
- Compositional 2 - Original message (complete thought)
Message of two or more sentences
List of short sentences
Short letter
- Compositional 3 - Long story with plot (four or more sentences)
Long letter that sticks to subject.

[Ignore: name
reversals
play with print (decorating letters)]

From: Green, C. (2985, March). A kindergarten compositional wr
scale. Paper given at the Spring meeting of the National Cou
Teachers of English, Houston, TX. (At Texas Tech U., Lubbock,
Connie)

Figure 20

Gentry's Stages of Invented Spelling

PRECOMMUNICATIVE-

Knowledge of alphabet, but no knowledge of letter-sound correspondence. Letters and numbers are used to randomly represent words.

SEMI-PHONETIC

Most salient sound features are represented in words. (Srd = sword, Matn = mountain)

Mapping of each word.

Letter name strategy used frequently (U = you, R = are)

PHONETIC

All surface sound features are represented in words. Advanced command of sound/letter correspondence (nis = nice, kampr = camper, pickshr = picture, kak = cake)
Word segmentation and space orientation at end of stage.

TRANSITIONAL

Many correct spelling patterns are applied. Morphological and visual spelling strategies

Some memorized words.

(howse = house, techre = teacher, enrtoob = inner tube.

Children's Development in Composition

PRECOMPOSITIONAL 1 (Lamme/Green) Scale

- Scribbles
- Mock letters
- A few letters or numbers
- A small string of letters or numbers

PRECOMPOSITIONAL 2

- Letters
- Mock letters read as words
- Repeated group of letters
- Incomplete alphabet or list of numerals
- One memorized or copied word.

PRECOMPOSITIONAL 3

- Mock words in a long list (some phonetic relationship to word)
- Message in invented spelling
- Complete alphabet (alone or with any of above)
- Word boundaries (spaces, dots, lines, etc.) to separate words)

COMPOSITIONAL 1

- Simple message (I love you)
- List of ten or more words (phonetic or memorized spelling)
- Complete alphabet with over ten words

COMPOSITIONAL 2

- Original message (complete thought)
- Message of two to four sentences
- List of short sentences
- Short letter

COMPOSITIONAL 3

- Long story with plot (four or more sentences)
- Long letter that sticks to subject.

Invented Spelling Stages PRECOMMUNICATIVE- (Gentry, 1981)

Knowledge of alphabet, but no knowledge of letter-sound correspondence. Letters and numbers are used to randomly represent words.

SEMI-PHONETIC

Most salient sound features are represented in words. (Srd = sword, Matn = mountain)
Mapping of each word.
Letter name strategy used frequently (U = you, R = are)

PHONETIC

All surface sound features are represented in words. Advanced command of sound/letter correspondence (nis = nice, kampr = camper, pickshr = picture, kak = cake)
Word segmentation and space orientation at end of stage.

TRANSITIONAL

Many correct spelling patterns are applied. Morphological and visual spelling strategies
Some memorized words.
(howse = house, techre = teacher, enrtoob = inner tube.

Invented Spelling Stages FIRST STAGE (Paul, 1976)

First letter or phoneme used to represent a word (B = bird)

SECOND STAGE

Ending and sometimes medial consonants are added. (SH = sun, MTR = monster, SRE = sorry)

THIRD STAGE

Short vowels are used. Interchange of vowels formed similarly in the mouth. Variety in use of vowels (het = hit, hul = hole, gud = good.)

FOURTH STAGE

Memorized sight words, diagraphs. (Chre = tree, slay = sleigh, skremed = screamed, Beth = beach)

(Green, 1985)

55

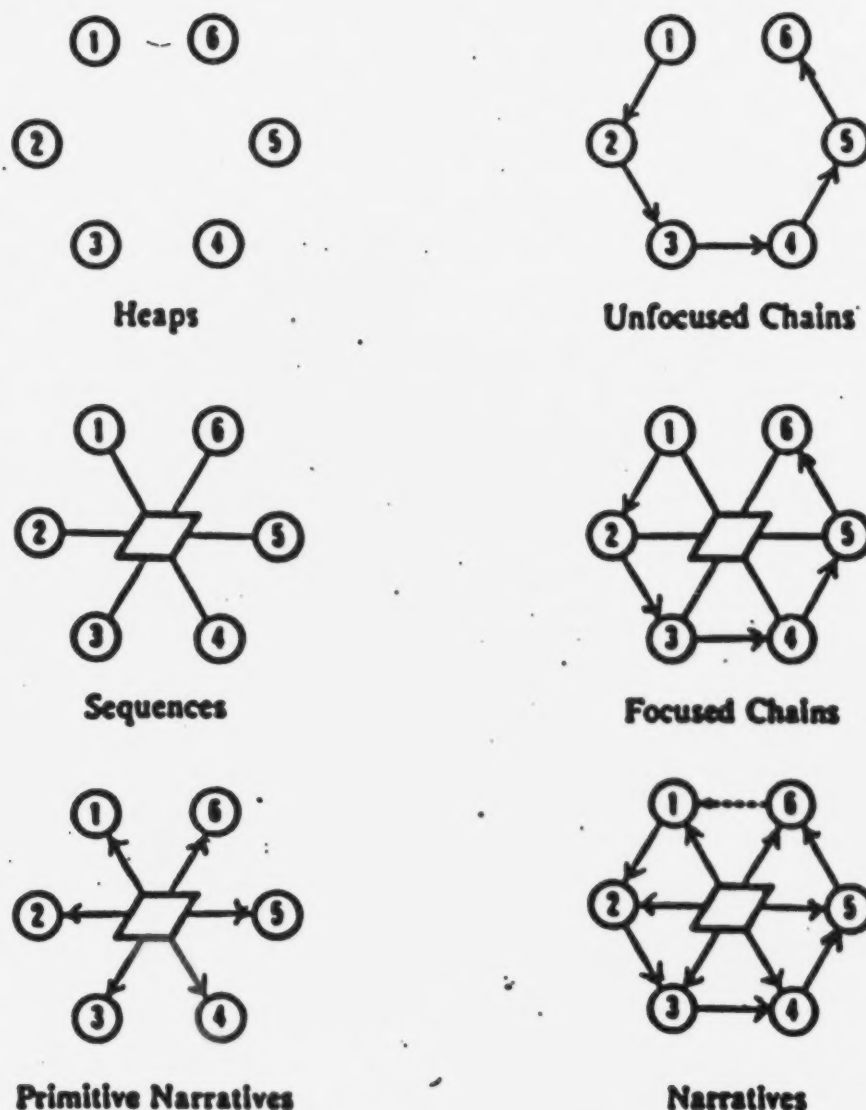


Figure 23. The structure of children's stories. Arrows indicate complementary attributes; straight lines, shared attributes; parallelograms, centers; circles, incidents or elements. (Reprinted from Applebee AN: *The Child's Concept of Story*. Chicago, © 1978, with permission of The University of Chicago Press.)

Figure 23. "Applebee's diagrams and description of children's story structure stages"

1
(of 3 pages)

Applebee's stages of story development (1978)

1) **HEAP STORIES:** There is no inherent organization among the individual propositions--the organization comes from whatever happens to attract the child's attention. Such stories consist of labeling or describing activities. The sentences in such stories are generally simple declarative sentences, almost always in the present progressive tense.

EXAMPLE:

The gorilla is climbing up the mountain. Snow's comin' up.

And the people are down there and all the houses and all the trees. It's all black and it's all brown.

2) **SEQUENCES:** Have simplistic macrostructures that involve a central character or setting. There is nothing that can be considered a story plot. Instead there is only a description of some activities that a character has done. The term sequence for this story structure is misleading because any apparent time sequence is not intentionally planned by the story teller and one event does not follow temporally or causally from the preceding event.

EXAMPLE:

A gorilla and robber were in the house. They were stealing things. They turned off the lights. They stole all the food in the church and stole the money and they stole a bunch of things. And they were walking in the snow at night. They didn't see the gorilla.

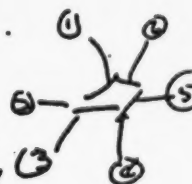


Figure 23; continued Applebee's diagrams and descriptions of children's story structure stages

3) **PRIMITIVE NARRATIVES:** Have a concrete core or center, object, or event that has temporarily assumed some importance. Primitive narratives are developed by collecting around the center a set of complementary attributes or events. In primitive narratives, characters, objects, and events are put together because they have a similar function or because they complement a set such as good behavior and bad behaviors. Elements of the story follow logically from the attributes of the center. The primitive narrative scheme represents the child's first use of inference in stories.

Same
drag
before

EXAMPLE:

There was this gorilla and this town people. And the town people went to go see if they could catch the gorilla. And the gorilla says, "Oh, I'm lonely. Look at these people down there. I wish I could go meet them, so I won't be all alone any more." So the townspeople go, "Let's go get him. Let's put him up. Let's catch him as a hostage." Then the gorilla goes, "Oh, I wish those people would be nice to me. I wish they'd quit chasing me, trying to beat me up." So the townspeople and the gorilla get together and they live happily ever after. The end.

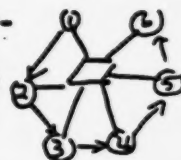
4) **UNFOCUSED CHAIN:** Children now perceive logical temporal or cause-effect relationships among events. Events are chained together. The unfocused chain stories, however, have no central theme or character. Each micro-structure element shares an attribute with the next, but the attribute is consistently changing.

EXAMPLE:

Once upon a time there was a bee that said, "Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz." The duck went "Quack, quack, quack." The sun went down, up down until it came back. There was a house which was the duck's house and they all went to his house to have supper. They ate hamburgers and drank their favorite punch. And then they all went out to take a little ride with a dog. Then they all went to the church to look around. They saw a married girl getting married. She was carrying a boy. The

Figure 23, continued. Applebee's diagrams and descriptions of ...
 boy and girl went home. They ate dinner. After dinner the
 baby came out.

5) **FOCUSED CHAIN:** The child combines a central character with a true sequence of events. Because the child lacks complete awareness of understanding of reciprocal relationships between character's attributes and events and the relationships between the events, the stories do not have strong plots because the events do not build on the attributes of the characters and do not result in growth of the character's personality. The characters are not motivated to achieve a goal. The ending does not have to follow logically from the beginning.



EXAMPLE:

King Kong was on the top of the mountain at night. There was lots of snow all over. He was gonna throw rocks down on the town, and kill all the people. The people knew he was up there. They got fire to burn him up with, and they climbed up the mountain. King Kong threw rocks at them and ran down the other side of the mountain. The end.

6) **TRUE NARRATIVE:** Narrative scheme stories have a central theme, character, and plot. The linking of events to the central character or theme are based on complementary attributes. Thus, the stories include the motivations behind the characters actions as well as the sequences of events.

EXAMPLE:

Both mother and father dipladacus were afraid to leave the valley. Mother dipladacus was afraid of the great tyranosoras rex. So one day little dipladacus went to the rocks. He didn't have anything to do. Then he began to throw rocks at the mountain. Then the big tyranasoras rex heard him. He lumbered forward filled with rage. Little dip was frightened but he was brave. He knew what to do! He began to throw roots at tyranasoras rex. He had no more rocks. So he began to hit tyranasoras rex with trees. Tyranasoras rex fell into the water, and dip was saved.

